

Jonathan A. Glenn  
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Example FQ: The Sea and Sea Voyages in *Beowulf*

Question

What effect do the sea voyages that parenthesize Scyld Scefing's life have on the involvement of the sea in the rest of *Beowulf*? Do we read the rest of the poem differently because of the way the poem begins?

Reference List

- 32–52..... Scyld's funeral voyage (His boyhood voyage is alluded to in 44–46; cf. 6–7.)
- 198–228..... Beowulf's voyage to Denmark
- 506–83..... Beowulf's swimming contest with Breca (two accounts)
- 895–96..... Sigmund and his treasure-filled boat (Cf. Scyld and his funeral ship; the association justifies including this item.)
- 1357–76, 1408–41..... Description of Grendel's habitat (This is relevant in building a constellation of water-references; note references to sea-beasts and sea-travelers in second passage.)
- 1492–1517, 1618–25.... Beowulf's journey into the mere to fight Grendel's mother and his return
- 1888–1925..... Beowulf's return to Geatland in a treasure-filled ship
- 2358–68..... Account of Beowulf's swimming home from Hyglac's Frisian raid
- 3120–62..... Two burials: dragon → sea; Beowulf → barrow (treasure-filled, but on land)  
(This is relevant by contrast with Scyld's funeral voyage; Beowulf becomes a beacon for sea-travelers.)

Preliminary Answer

Here, of course, I would, "in three or four cogent paragraphs," indicate my preliminary answer to the question I have posed. Though I won't take the time at this point to write an example, I will point out that like any essay, large or small, this one should be appropriately direct and adequately developed, keeping always in mind the limits imposed by the syllabus on the length of an FQ.